

Burrowing Owl

December 2016—February 2017 Vol. 45, No. 4

Welcome to the Central New Mexico Audubon Society!
A 501(c)(3) organization. cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org

Come join us! All our meetings and field trips are open to the public.

Central New Mexico



Audubon Society



Christmas Bird Counts

Be a part of the longest-running citizen science project in the country! Now in its 117th year, the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count will take place from December 14, 2016, through January 5, 2017.

Every citizen scientist who has ever braved snow, wind, or rain (or New Mexico sunshine!) to take part in the Christmas Bird

Count has made an enormous contribution to ornithological history and conservation.

Come count birds with us—it's fun, it's important, and it's free!

There are a total of 37 counts in New Mexico, and about 10 are within an hour and a half drive from Albuquerque.

The schedule for central New Mexico counts is on the next page.

MESA Students Creating Artistic Entry to Refuge Visitor Center

A grant of \$1,800 has been awarded by CNMAS to the Math, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) program at Truman Middle School in Albuquerque for the students' community-service projects at Mesa del Oro NWR.

The MESA students, with the help of the Refuge's resident artist, Wren Walraven, are painting a four-seasons mural on the walls of the school patio. They have also designed a human- and bird-friendly landscape to be planted in the spring, and they are building a labyrinth of river rocks between the visitor center and temporary offices.

The MESA advisor is Lynn Schuler, who is also education coordinator for Central New Mexico Audubon.

Winter Presentations

Central New Mexico Audubon will begin the new year January 19 with a talk by Christopher Rustay about the birds he saw in Ethiopia last year, including the Robin-chat at right.

The February 16 presentation by Kristin Madden will be about the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Both programs will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Adelante Community Room, 3800 Osuna Road NE.

Details are on page 3.



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Christmas Bird Count Schedule

Five Points

Wednesday, December 14

Compilers Nancy and Steve Cox will again conduct the Five Points count. Please contact Nancy and Steve at 505-345-2385 or sora@spinn.net for more information and to join the count.

Sevilletta National Wildlife Refuge

Friday, December 16

Please join Steve and Nancy Cox for the count at Sevilletta NWR. For more information, contact Nancy or Steve at 505-345-2385 or sora@spinn.net.

Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, December 17

Please contact Dave Hawksworth at dlhawksworth@gmail.com or (505) 507-5343 for information.

Valle de Oro

Saturday, December 17

Please join the fourth CBC at Valle de Oro. Meet inside the refuge's main building, 7851 Second St. SW, at

7:00 a.m. RSVP with Ariel Elliott: vdocbc@gmail.com or 505-933-4924. The compilation dinner will be at Abuelita's New Mexican Kitchen, 6083 Isleta Blvd SW, at 5:00 p.m.

Bluewater Lake

Saturday, December 17

Join a new CBC this year! Head west to visit one of Cibola County's hotspots, Bluewater Lake. Volunteers will meet 9 miles west of Grants at Bowlin's Bluewater Outpost and Dairy Queen off Interstate 40 (exit 72) at 6:30 a.m. Only an hour and 10 minute drive from Albuquerque! Contact John Trochet at trochetj@gmail.com if you wish to participate, and for more information. Car pooling from ABQ can be arranged. The compilation dinner will be celebrated at the Wow Diner in Milan at 5:00 p.m.

Albuquerque

Sunday, December 18

Please contact the count compiler, Dave Mehlman, at (505) 350-3616 or mehlmand@earthlink.net to sign up and for more details on count day and territory assignments. The compilation party will be from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at O'Niell's Irish Pub in the Heights at 3301 Juan Tabo NE, north of Candelaria on the west side of the street.

New Log for Capulin Spring

Nutchatches, bluebirds, juncoes and Band-tailed Pigeons are splashing and sipping in inch-deep puddles at Capulin Spring.

Members of Friends of Sandia Mountain, a volunteer group for the Sandia Ranger District, felled a tall Ponderosa, peeled off the bark, carved one side flat and cut out a five-inch-wide box for the new trough. At the request of CNMAS vice president Judy Liddell, they cut a few deeper puddles for birds who like to bathe.

It was a new job for the versatile FOSM crew. Crew chief Sam Beard began by Googling "carve a dugout canoe." New tools and new techniques were required, especially for moving the log, which Beard said might weigh 500 pounds.



Photo by Melissa Howard

The log is part of a multi-year grant-funded project led by Talking Talons, with Audubon, the Sandia Ranger District and FOSM as partners.

Details on CNMAS Winter Presentations

Thursday, January 19

Birding in Ethiopia

Christopher Rustay

Ethiopia is known as the “Roof of Africa.” It has some of the highest peaks on the continent as well as lakes, deserts, moist forests and dry plains.

Situated near the Equator with migrants from both southern Africa and Eurasia, one can see why the country has the 26th largest list of birds in the world. Yet only recently has it been birded with any regularity, and it is now becoming known as a destination among European birders.

We’ll look in on Christopher’s March 2016 birding tour to see some of the spectacular birds and scenery in this unique and exciting country.

Christopher was born in New York State, grew up in North Carolina and began birding at the age of six. He cut his birding teeth in New Mexico, where he has lived for over 30 years.

For the last decade he has worked with the Playa Lakes Joint Venture, an organization dedicated to preserving the bird life of the western Great Plains. He also compiled the first New Mexico Bird Conservation Plan and has been involved with Audubon for almost 25 years.



Bonus photo:
Ruppel’s Starling by
Christopher Rustay

Thursday, February 16

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and You

Kristen Madden

In 2018, we will celebrate the Centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), the mechanism by which we implement the treaties and conventions for the protection of migratory birds. It has been a century of great progress tempered with significant challenges.



In this talk, Kristin will discuss what led to the need for such an act, highlights of the last 100 years of bird conservation, current challenges, and what the MBTA means to birders and bird researchers in New Mexico.

Kristin is the Deputy Chief of Migratory Birds for the Southwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She helps lead a team of biological, permitting, financial, and administrative professionals dedicated to full-life-cycle avian conservation. Kristin also serves as the Regional Joint Venture Coordinator for eight partnerships. She serves on the national Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial and Urban Bird Treaty teams. She has been an avian biologist, wildlife rehabilitator, and environmental educator in New Mexico for nearly 20 years.

**Programs start at 7 p.m. at the
Adelante Community Room,
3800 Osuna Rd. NE,
Albuquerque**

Winter Weekend Field Trips

December

There will be no scheduled weekend field trip in December so that members can participate in the annual Christmas Bird Counts. Please see the schedule for central New Mexico counts in this newsletter or visit <http://www.rioembudobirds.org/nmcbc/> to contact a compiler and join a count near you.

January

Sandia Crest

Saturday, January 14

Meet Lefty Arnold (wanderingtattlerja@yahoo.com) in the north parking lot of the Sprouts at Tramway and Central for a 7:30 a.m. departure. Our main goal will be to search for all three species of Rosy-finch in the comfort of the Crest House Cafe. We will then head out onto the trails looking for other specialties such as Red Crossbill, American Three-Toed Woodpecker, Cassin's Finch, and Pine Grosbeak. The trip will conclude by 1 p.m. Lunch can be bought in the Crest House, but if people choose not to buy food, please respect their "no outside food" policy. Questions? Please email or call me at 505-514-9398.

February

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, February 4

Join Kim Score (firefinch@usa.net) at 7:20 a.m. for a 7:30 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorne Suites on University and Gibson. A secondary meeting place will be McDonald's in Socorro at 8:45. The group will depart for Bosque del Apache at 9:00



and travel first along the Farm-Market-Road to look for raptors and grassland passerines. The route at the refuge will depend on what species are being seen at different locations within the refuge. Bring lunch. A \$5 entrance fee or federal pass is required per car. The group

should be back in Albuquerque in the late afternoon. For those not driving, please plan on paying \$10 for shared gas expenses. Please RSVP with Kim.

Another Opportunity

Every third Saturday of the month Valle de Oro NWR offers two guided bird walks: one for the beginning enthusiast and one for the more advanced birder. The walks are structured depending on participant turn-out and time of year. Since birds and other wildlife are most active early in the morning, the goal is to start within one hour of sunrise. Start times vary; details are on the Events page of the Friends of Valle de Oro website: <http://friendsofvalledeoro.wildapricot.org/>



My Future Path, Thanks to the Colorado Bird Camp

By *Jeremy Molloy*

Five years ago, I went to the Festival of the Cranes in Socorro. I met Raymond VanBuskirk and he taught me how to identify the Bufflehead and gave me a bird book. I soon fell in love with birds and went on every bird-watching event I could.

This last summer, with the help of the Ryan D. Beaulieu Youth Memorial Scholarship from CNMAS, I was able to attend the ABA Camp Colorado bird camp. I had the time of my life! I met so many friends and added quite a few birds to my life list. I really enjoyed traveling around the mountains of Denver, learning about bird identification, and finding and watching interesting birds.

When we arrived at 5 p.m. we did a bird walk around the camp, made our introductions, and told our worst g-rated jokes. The next day we started really traveling and doing some hard-core birdwatching. Right off the bat, we saw a Williamson's Sapsucker in the Rocky Mountain National Forest. I also saw my first lifer of the trip: the American Dipper. Wednesday was the big day in which we tried to identify as many birds as possible over multiple elevations and ecosystems. We saw 96 species, including a very large flock of Mountain Plovers.

Thursday we hiked into the high elevations of Rocky Mountain National Park and saw two White-tailed Ptarmigans!



The best part of that day occurred when we found a family of Three-toed Woodpeckers. While we were watching them, a traffic jam developed on the road because people stopped to see them too. Our leaders called it a Bird Jam. Finally on Friday, we went to the foothills to get a look at Lazuli Buntings, Cedar Waxwings, and Swainson's Hawks.

The next day we all said goodbye, but the impact this experience has had on my life will always be there. The last five years have sparked an interest in me, but now, because of this camp, and the people I met, I have decided to make ornithology my career. Thank you, CNMAS, for providing me the Ryan Scholarship so I could have this opportunity.



Owl's Pick for Photo of the Quarter:

Juvenile Kestrels at RGNC by Michele Weisz



Audubon Thursday Birders Schedule

Winter 2016—2017

DECEMBER 1

Hike down Bear Canyon with Rebecca Gracey: 505-242-3821, maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com, followed by a holiday potluck lunch at the home of Liz and Larry Kuo. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Michael Emery Trailhead parking lot east of Tramway on Spain. (Spain is north of Montgomery and south of Paseo del Norte.) Follow Spain until it ends at High Desert Place. Turn right for a short distance to the parking lot. The group will walk a mile and then go to the Kuo's nearby home for lunch. Soup and coffee will be provided. Everyone else should bring other dishes and beverages to share with the group. Directions to the Kuo's home will be handed out at the hike. If not attending the walk, contact Rebecca for directions.

DECEMBER 8

Visit Pueblo Montano Open Space for a walk along the bosque with Pauline and Bernie Morris: 505-369-1227, mtnbluebird@verizon.net. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot that is located on the south side of Montano and one block east of Coors. It can be accessed from either street. This will be a two-mile walk ending before noon.

DECEMBER 15

Walk around the Tingley bosque ponds with Linda Otterson: 505-280-3123, lotterson300@comcast.net. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the north end of the Tingley Beach parking lot. To reach the area, drive west on Central Avenue past Rio Grande Boulevard, then turn left on Tingley Drive. Take the first right from Tingley Drive, and at the stop sign, turn right to the dirt overflow parking lot. This leaves the few parking spots by the concession stand for people who want to fish. The walk will be about one mile in length. The group will go to the Barelas Coffee House at 1502 4th St. SW for lunch.

DECEMBER 22

Walk in the Open Space Visitor Center and nearby bosque with Sara Jayne Cole: 505-503-5599, birdlajoya@gmail.com. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the center's parking lot

on the east side of Coors Boulevard. The entrance road, Bosque Meadows Road, is located north of Montano Road and south of Paseo del Norte. It will be a one-mile walk ending before noon.

DECEMBER 29

Walk in the Durand Open Space in the South Valley with Maurice Mackey: 505-897-0415, moemackey@comcast.net. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the open space parking lot at 4812 Isleta SW. To reach the open space, drive south on I-25 and exit on Rio Bravo. Drive west on Rio Bravo and turn south onto Isleta Boulevard. Drive two miles to the property on the east. The walk will be about one mile in length. The group will go to lunch at Abuelita's New Mexican Kitchen at 6083 Isleta SW.

JANUARY 5

Hike around the Sandia Ranger Station and Otero Canyon with Lannois Neely: 505-890-7881, lfneely@aol.com. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot of the Sandia Ranger Station on NM 337 in Tijeras. The group will carpool from there to the canyon, 3.5 miles south on NM 337. The one-mile walk will end before noon. The trails in both locations are uneven so a walking stick might be helpful.

JANUARY 12

Drive to see raptors on the eastern plains of Tarrant County with Bonnie Long: 505-379-1985, cantrade_1@yahoo.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the parking lot on the west side of the Tijeras Senior Center on NM 333/ Rt. 66. To reach the parking area, turn north on Tijeras Avenue, just west of the Tijeras Library. The group will drive south of Moriarty and Estancia to look for raptors. Lunch will be at the Old Mill in Estancia. The group should be back in Tijeras in the late afternoon. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$5 at five cents per mile.

continued on the next page

Thursday Birders continued

JANUARY 19

Drive to Sandia Crest to look for the Rosy-Finches with Barbara Hussey: 505-385-1165, brhussey@flash.net. Meet at 9:50 a.m. for a 10:00 departure from the west side of the Four Hills Shopping Village located on Central Avenue between Tramway and Juan Tabo. Snacks or lunch may be bought at the Crest House restaurant as the group waits inside for the Rosy-Finches to arrive at the feeders. A \$3 parking fee or federal pass is required per car. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$3 at five cents per mile. The trip should end in the early afternoon.

JANUARY 26

Walk in the Alameda Open Space in the North Valley with Gale Owings: 505-255-8333. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the Open Space parking lot on the south side of Alameda Boulevard, just east of the Rio Grande River. The one-mile walk will end before noon.

FEBRUARY 2

Visit the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area in Belen with Linda Heinze: 505-565-1441, manzanogal@gmail.com. Meet at 8:50 a.m. for a 9:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorne Suites on Gibson and University Boulevard or 9:45 at WWCA on NM 47. The walk will be about 1.5 miles in length. Lunch will be at Rutilio's Restaurant, 2350 Main St. NE, in Los Lunas near the intersection of NM 47 and NM 6/Main. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$4 at five cents per mile.

FEBRUARY 9

Visit the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge with Judy Liddell: 505-220-7998, jliddell@msn.com. Meet at 7:50 a.m. for an 8:00 departure from the parking lot behind the Hawthorne Suites on University

Boulevard and Gibson. A secondary meeting place will be McDonald's in Socorro at 9:15 for a quick rest stop and just enough time to get food to go. Please tell Judy if you plan to meet the group in Socorro. The group will depart for the Bosque del Apache at 9:30. Bring lunch. A \$5 entrance fee or federal pass is required per car. The group should be back in Albuquerque in the late afternoon. For those not driving the shared gas expense is \$10 at five cents per mile.

FEBRUARY 16

Walk around the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park with Leah Henzler: 505-280-2085, lfcairns@gmail.com. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Candelaria wetland blind in the northeast corner of the Nature Center parking lot. A \$3 parking fee, State Parks Pass, or Friends of the RGNC pass is required per car. The visitor center opens at 10:00. After that time one may use the restrooms and or purchase either parking pass. The walk will be about one mile in length followed by lunch at Village Pizza located at 3851 Rio Grande NW, at the corner of Rio Grande Boulevard and Griegos.

FEBRUARY 23

Walk in the Willow Creek Bosque in the Rio Rancho Bosque Open Space with Becky Purvis: 505-688-1998, rpurvis3@yahoo.com. Meet at 9:00 in the open space parking lot. For people not living on the west side of the river, go north on I-25 and take the exit to Bernalillo/US 550. Drive west on 550 to the traffic light at NM 528. Turn south on 528 for 1.8 miles. Turn east at the traffic light on Willow Creek Road. Drive three blocks to the entrance just past Spruce Mountain Loop on an unpaved road that follows an arroyo to the parking lot. The one-mile walk will end before noon.

Volunteers Join Marsh Clean-Up

By Eileen Beaulieu

On Saturday morning, October 22, the CNMAS Belen Marsh Committee had over 20 enthusiastic people show up to clean the Belen Marsh and Don Felipe Road. We would like to recognize the Vocational Rehabilitation Program at the NM Veterans Affairs Health Care Services as they made up the majority of our volunteers this time.

Unfortunately, as always we had lots of junk and trash to pick up. It seems that folks still don't realize what a special place the Belen Marsh truly is and continue to dump trash and throw garbage out their car windows.

We try to clean during the months of October and April. Participants are provided with vests, trash bags, gloves, water and snacks. I will begin posting the new date in March 2017. In the meantime if you're interested in learning more about the Marsh, please feel free to contact me at dulcebeaulieu@comcast.net.

Cat-friendly Parasite can be Deadly

By Sara Jane Cole

A form of toxoplasmosis is a disease spread by cats that infects as many as 60 million Americans, well as most mammals and some birds.

Mice infected with the "cat-friendly parasite" *Toxoplasma gondii* look for cats. The parasite can only reproduce in the intestine of the cat, who may bury feces in gardens and play areas.

Toxoplasmosis can cause life-threatening problems for babies born to women infected during pregnancy and for people with compromised immune systems.

Toxoplasma gondii is estimated to cost Americans nearly \$3 billion in medical harm each year. The Emerging Pathogens Institute links it to an estimated 86,686 illnesses a year, resulting in 327 deaths. By comparison, Salmonella sickens 1,027,561 people annually.

The *T. gondii* parasite has spread to beluga whales and otters in waters that scientists believe have been contaminated with cat feces.

Indoor cats who use a litter box are not at risk for contracting or spreading the parasite.

"While we . . . acknowledge the important role pet cats play in many people's lives, it is clear that the continued presence of feral cats in our parks and neighborhoods is having detrimental impacts on people and wildlife," said Grant Sizemore, Director of Invasive Species Programs at American Bird Conservancy.

What's the Bird-friendliest Coffee of All?

By Tomas Radcliffe

Many ornithophiles make conscientious consumer decisions in order to benefit the birds they love. However, given the misleading and confusing labels on many products, making the most ethical consumer-conservation decisions is not always easy. While buying organic coffee is generally better than buying conventional, and while buying shade-grown organic coffee is usually better than buying just organic, the coffee that best protects and preserves vital neotropical bird habitat is Bird Friendly-certified coffee with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center seal on the bag. The essential difference between bird-friendly and merely shade-grown is that the former has criteria for native trees and for mixes of trees and shrubs of varying heights to provide more vital habitat.

There are currently only a few stores in the Albuquerque area that offer shade-grown, organic coffee, and none that carry the Bird Friendly-certified coffee that the Cornell Lab of Ornithology recommends, Birds and Beans. La Montanita Co-op primarily carries Equal Exchange brand coffees, which are "overwhelmingly shade-grown" according to the company's website but do not offer shade-grown certification. If you are a member of La Montanita, you may want to suggest that the co-op carry a coffee with Bird Friendly certification, such as Birds and Beans. Whole Food's Allegro "Early Bird" Coffee is certified Bird Friendly.

If you would like to purchase Bird Friendly coffee online, go to Birdsandbeans.com.

CNMAS Directory and Contacts

Central New Mexico Audubon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit chapter of the National Audubon Society, Inc.

Our mission: To appreciate, experience, and conserve birds, other wildlife and their habitats;
and to encourage and support environmental education in New Mexico.

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Other birding and wildlife resources:

<http://cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org>

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The CNMAS Membership Form is on the web site:

cnmas.newmexicoaudubon.org

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